

Urban Design

QUALITY
BY
DESIGN



Urban design refers to the physical appearance of a city as expressed in the design of buildings, landscaping, signage, streetscapes, open spaces, public spaces and roadways. Urban design is a function of architecture, site design and responsible planning that assists in the formulation of programs and projects that offer the most beneficial impact upon the community. Projects built within the City should provide linkages between the new and existing to create a cohesive overall effect. Historic preservation is also considered an essential part of urban design and a good plan would be impossible to achieve without its inclusion. The end result is a city transformed through quality design, both in the rehabilitation of existing structures, the design of new structures and through the creation of new, attractive public spaces that invite public interaction and improve the overall quality of the city's built environment for all residents.

PRINCIPAL DESIGN CONCEPTS

Spatial Linkage Concepts

Central to the issue of creating a more attractive city is the concept of making the experience of moving through the city a pleasant one. Linking different neighborhoods together through a quality spatial experience is viewed as a solid mechanism to improve the daily life experience in El Paso, especially at the neighborhood scale. Spatial linkages are streetscape concepts that increase the quality of moving from one part of the city to another. By employing consistent design elements such as street lighting and color banners, it is possible to create a unifying environment that ties different neighborhoods together. Use of different design elements in separate parts of the city would give each area its own unique identity.

Examples of the spatial linkages include: creating an axial corridor along Oregon Street from the UTEP campus south, over a covered portion of I-10 into downtown El Paso and continuing on to the border, linking into Avenida Juarez on the Mexico side of the border. Implementation of a light rail system on both sides of the border and the provision of pedestrian amenities could create a strong, axial open space environment that would attract both residents and visitors alike.

Perpendicular to this axis could be the development of other linkages: an open space pedestrian system connecting the Civic Center, Union Plaza and the Art Museum with the retail core along San Antonio Street with a new Government Plaza located on the eastern end of the street. As a complement to the streetscape, creating a series of plazas and squares would create areas for people to congregate. This would encourage additional usage of San Antonio Street. Creating a spatial linkage to Oregon Street from the Arizona/Rio Grande neighborhood and the Kern Place neighborhood to the UTEP campus are two concepts in development. A third linkage would create a pedestrian mall within the campus of El Paso Community College. Consistent

and unified streetscape designs would help tie the system of linkages together. Similar treatment can be conceived for and applied to different neighborhoods around the city.



Neighborhood Design and Compatibility

An important principle in community design is that there be consistency from one neighborhood to the next, so that a unique identity can be derived from that consistency. Since different sections of a neighborhood are built by competing

developers, it is critical to visualize a larger concept and follow basic principles of good neighborhood design before approving individual subdivisions. Furthermore, it is desirable to have a certain level of consistency in the design of residences and other buildings within an area to impart a harmonious visual experience and compatibility from one neighborhood to the next. The following design principles are considered representative of good neighborhood design.

- Development should be in the form of compact, walkable neighborhoods and/or districts. Such places should have clearly defined centers and edges. The center should include a public space, such as a square, village green, or an important street intersection, and public buildings, such as a library, church or community center, a transit stop and retail businesses.

-
- Neighborhoods and districts should be compact (typically no more than one quarter mile from center to edge) and detailed to encourage pedestrian activity without excluding automobiles all together. Streets should be laid out as an interconnected network, forming coherent blocks where building entrances front the street rather than parking lots. Public transit should connect neighborhoods to each other, and the surrounding region.
 - A diverse mix of activities (residences, shops, schools, work places and parks, etc.) should occur in close proximity. Also, a wide spectrum of housing options should enable people of a broad range of incomes, ages, and family types to live within a single neighborhood/district. Large developments featuring a single use or serving a single market segment should be avoided.
 - Civic buildings, such as government offices, churches and libraries, should be sited in prominent locations. Open spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, squares, and greenbelts should be provided in convenient locations throughout a neighborhood.
 - All planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing work places, commercial space, housing, schools, parks, open space, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of residents.
 - Community size should be designed so that jobs, housing, daily needs, and other activities are within easy walking distance to each other and to transit stops.
 - Businesses within the community should provide a range of job types for the community's residents.
 - A community should contain diverse housing types to ensure an economically and ethnically diverse community.
 - The community should be integrated within a larger transit network. Streets, pedestrian paths, and bike paths should contribute to a system of fully connected, interesting routes and destinations. High-speed traffic should be discouraged.
 - Communities should provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping, and recycling. The community design should help conserve natural resources and minimize waste.
 - Street orientation, placement of buildings, and use of shading should contribute to the energy efficiency of the community.
 - Materials and methods of construction should be specific to the region, exhibiting a continuity of history and culture and compatibility with the climate to encourage the development of local character and community identity.

Aesthetics

Landscaping and Streetscape Designs

There is a desperate need for quality landscaping of street medians, parkways and parking lots. This is an important issue that has direct impact on the quality of life for all El Paso residents. Tree planting is an economical urban design investment that can create an immediate positive impact. Major arterials should be landscaped in similar motifs to distinguish them from streets of lower hierarchy, which would be treated



Left and Below: *Landscaped sidewalks in residential areas.*



differently. This approach will assist in the identification of the street system by its users. Due to El Paso's desert location, it is understood that drought tolerant plant species would be used almost exclusively.

A significant landscaping campaign along the City's roadways and within the site of all new buildings is seen as an excellent way to make El Paso a more attractive place to live. This will in turn make this City more attractive to those who visit, create more return visitors, boosting tourism and the overall economy. Related to the issue of landscaping is the development of attractive streetscapes. This involves the planting of rows of trees along streets as a unifying design theme. The tree planting will not only create a particular identity for an area but would also provide shade. Other elements that come into play in the design of streetscapes are the use of lighting standards, benches and trash receptacles that are of similar design and color to offer a consistent design theme for a particular street. Redevelopment is greatly assisted by attractive streetscape concepts.

Scenic Corridors, Signage and Lighting

There are portions of El Paso's urban environment that offer beautiful views of the Franklin Mountains and the areas that surround the City. Preservation of these scenic assets is important as it can encourage tourism, provide visual relief, and add to the quality of life in El Paso. A critical component of creating a scenic corridor is to control of signage along the roadway. Uncontrolled signage becomes a blighting factor and promotes a negative image which affects tourism, investment decisions, and economic development. For these reasons and others, the control of sign location and design can have a dramatically positive effect upon the quality of the urban environment.

Affordable Housing Issues

Despite the availability of lower income housing choices in the City, a great need remains to provide additional affordable housing for the citizens of El Paso. The goal is to provide decent, safe, affordable housing to the lower income segments of the population throughout El Paso County. The challenge is to provide home ownership opportunities to families with annual incomes of \$24,000 or less. Programs are being developed to help meet these needs. The technology is available, and mortgage financing has been secured to complete the formula to begin construction.

Additionally, the Department of Planning recognizes a need to review existing housing practices, building codes, subdivision requirements and processing fee schedules. In the interest of enhancing opportunities for affordable housing units, a review has been initiated to identify potential cost-saving measures. A cooperative effort between private, non-profit and governmental agencies will be needed to fully accomplish this endeavor.

The end result will be the provision of units needed to provide quality housing for all El Pasoans. In 1999, the City of El Paso was awarded designation as a Federal Empowerment Zone. Grants associated with this designation will be used to strengthen the community. It is anticipated that a good portion of these funds will be applied towards generating more affordable housing opportunities for these designated areas.

Historic Preservation

By the 1850s there were four settlements north of the river in the El Paso area: Franklin, located in what is now Downtown; Concordia; Magoffinsville, just east of Downtown; and Hart's Mill to the west. In 1881, the railroads arrived in El Paso and the future of this multi-lingual, bi-national, multi-cultural western town was assured. The Anglo-Americans brought a new architecture with them that was to take root among the Spanish Colonial and Mexican adobe buildings of El Paso. The architects from the east brought not only new building materials, but also new styles. The high Victorian and Second Empire were followed by the Beaux Arts and many revival styles for homes. El Paso's historic building boom began in the 1890s and culminated in the Art Deco of the early 1930s.

Current Preservation Efforts

Interest in the preservation of the historic and architectural assets of El Paso has increased significantly based on economic, aesthetic and cultural rationalizations. El Paso's nine historic districts and individual historic landmarks represent over 300 years of continuous history. Historic preservation is seen as an essential part of a successful urban design program. A good program would be virtually impossible to sustain without inclusion of the older structures into the urban fabric. Design policies should be consistent over time and the effects of preservation efforts and good design decisions will manifest themselves in the long term.

Historic districts have been established in City of El Paso in areas of significant historic value. The names and locations of the nine historic districts as of 1999 are: Austin Terrace; Chihuahuita; Downtown; Magoffin; Manhattan Heights; Old San Francisco; Sunset Heights; Ysleta; and the Mission Trail Historic Corridor and District. A location map of the City's historic districts is included in the **Map Atlas of The Plan**.



Above: Facade of the Cortez Building in Downtown El Paso.

Master Planned Communities

The master planned community concept has direct applicability to growing areas of the City. Designing an entire neighborhood utilizing design standards for street design, building densities and setbacks will help to create a stronger sense of community within that neighborhood and improve residents' quality of life. The primary focus is to design living environments that focus on the human being instead of the automobile. Also, with a fresh opportunity to create a new environment, these communities can be designed with

Case Study: The YWCA / Hueco Master Plan

Background

The Hueco Conference and Recreation Center was given to the YWCA by the El Paso Natural Gas Company in 1996. The center and the surrounding property consists of 436 acres and a full service recreation facility complete with meeting rooms, banquet facilities, soccer and softball fields, swimming pool, and a 9 hole golf course.

For the YWCA, The Hueco Center represents two unique opportunities: 1) to offer a state of the art recreation facility to the broader El Paso community for summer camps, company picnics, business and professional development, and recreation uses; and 2) to create a master plan for an intentionally diverse, mixed income, mixed use planned community for the El Paso region.

YWCA / Hueco Master Plan

With planning money from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, in 1998, the YWCA hired a team of architects from Duany Plater-Zyberk, Moule & Polyzoides, and Moore, Nordell and Kroeger to develop the master plan for the Hueco property. After a week long charrette held in January 1999, with input from over 300 individuals, the master plan included a mixture of several residential prototypes, a town center, and commercial and retail uses, to create a sense of community typically lacking in suburban subdivisions.

The Master Plan will utilizes the principles of New Urbanism, which represent current practices in the planning profession, to develop a safe and aesthetically appealing planned community that reflects the economic and ethnic demographics of the El Paso region.

The Hueco Master Plan consists of up to 2,000 single and multi family units of low, moderate and market rate housing as well as public amenities, such as schools, retail shops, commercial space, parks and open space, and other facilities essential to the daily life of residents.



Right: Proposed master planned community streetscape.



Above: Proposed streetscape for master planned community.

Project Benefits

- *Provide a mixture of housing types, with emphasis on affordable housing.*
- *Allow for planned expansion of the City in the direction it is already growing. Such planned development will allow infrastructure to come before growth.*
- *Set the tone for future development in the area.*
- *Provide needed parks and recreation space, open space, bike and hiking trails as desired by the City's Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Plan.*
- *Develop in a manner consistent with the goals and policies included in the Comprehensive Plan for El Paso for 2025.*
- *Place national focus on El Paso with a cutting edge community development project.*

additional parks, open space linkages between parks, and central plazas that contain a concentration of civic and commercial facilities which encourages social interaction among residents. The major streets can be designed as attractive, landscaped parkways that are a pleasure to drive through. The objective is to create a quality living experience for all residents in all segments of their life experience. El Paso has recently been the site of the design of a master planned community for an area on the far East side. The Case Study in this Chapter is an application of these principles to a proposed El Paso neighborhood.

DOWNTOWN ISSUES

International Connectivity

It is widely held that the principal focus to achieve true downtown redevelopment is to develop a stronger connection between downtown El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Studies are currently underway to analyze ways to develop a strong pedestrian centered avenue that connects the two countries together. The central concept is to develop an international light rail system from the center of downtown Juarez northward along Oregon Street from the border to the campus of UTEP. On a daily basis, there is a significant amount of pedestrian traffic in both directions across the border. Improving the pedestrian experience and creating a light rail system on both sides of the border to assist the movement of people would make it more attractive for people to visit and move throughout both downtown areas. By focusing on the strengths and the opportunities available for connecting the economies of the two countries, both nations will reap the positive benefits of increased tourism and commerce in this border region.

Below: Downtown El Paso and the Santa Fe port-of-entry.



Downtown Redevelopment

Discussions have been revived on the development of a riverwalk linear park along the Rio Grande, west of

Downtown. This concept is also discussed in the Community Facilities section of *The Plan*. If successfully developed, this linear park would create a major catalyst to Downtown redevelopment efforts. The possible construction of a new multi purpose arena somewhere in the downtown area would be yet another reason for new businesses to relocate downtown and renovate older structures into new offices and retail storefronts.

The construction of these proposed projects along with the Civic Center expansion area would create the need for more hotel rooms downtown. The construction of at least one, possibly two new downtown hotels adjacent to the Civic Center would assist in accommodating visitors and would also help to bring more new conferences to El Paso. Such a project will also help to infuse the downtown area with new vitality.

Below: *Downtown Redevelopment efforts in Union Plaza.*



Another key component in the revitalization of downtown is to fill the vacant buildings and storefronts wherever they may exist. There are numerous buildings downtown and elsewhere that are partially or completely vacant. The re-use of these structures for housing and commercial uses has direct implications in downtown revitalization. In order to have vitality in any particular area, occupancy is critical. The influx of residents, visitors and new businesses creates the vitality that will make downtown an attractive and exciting environment in which to live and work on a daily basis. As these projects are completed, downtown will be slowly transformed to a more contemporary urban center, full of numerous shopping, civic and recreational opportunities.



Above: *Downtown housing.*

Downtown Housing Strategies

As is the case in many major cities, there has been a substantial population out-migration from the downtown area to outlying suburbs. El Paso is no exception; the City has experienced this out-migration pattern for many years. El Paso needs to bring more residents back to its urban center. Government actions alone will not transform downtown. The success of any initiative is contingent upon involvement from the private sector. This is especially true for the creation of housing. Private investment is a crucial element to the development of a downtown housing market.

In order to create residential neighborhoods Downtown, a wide range of housing choices for people of all incomes is critical. The more immediate housing efforts should focus around the renovation of vacant, historic buildings. Part of the conversion of

the upper stories of vacant structures to apartments for new downtown residents is highly desirable to create a mix of residential and commercial uses. The ground floor of these structures would house office/retail functions.

Historic rehabilitation and low income tax credits are two financing sources that can be used to make these projects a reality. In conjunction with the public sector improvements, the private sector should respond with the provision of additional amenities. In addition to the conversion of older buildings, the redevelopment of vacant lots is considered another critical component that has the potential for increasing the number of low and moderate income housing units. A variety of townhouse and low rise apartment buildings are proposed to add to the existing housing stock. Finally, the renovation of existing housing units in the neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown core will strengthen this area and add more vitality to the urban center.

Railyard Conversions

On both the east and west sides of the downtown area, there are significant parcels of land that have been historically used by both the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern & Santa Fe railroads for their switching yards, container transfer and maintenance facilities. It is anticipated that some of these railyard facilities may be vacated as a part of facility upgrade and consolidation. In that instance, the conversion of these rail facilities to new and different uses has major implications for the City.

Redevelopment options in these areas would take on new importance. The concepts of locating a new multi use sports arena and other community facilities in the vicinity of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe switching yards and the location of a large park along the river could alter the urban design pattern of downtown, adding a new focal point to downtown redevelopment. The number of sporting, entertainment and cultural events held in this new facility and the resultant pedestrian activity before and after events would create numerous economic development opportunities in this area. New restaurants and other shops would be needed to serve the needs of the facility users. This activity could help revitalize the buildings in the Union Plaza District, which, in turn, would create more social opportunities to conventioners using the expanded Civic Center.

The potential redevelopment opportunities that would be available east of downtown if the Union Pacific railyard were to be vacated, would be even more significant. The acreage currently used for the switching yard would allow a major mixed use development to be constructed. A principal component of that development would be a significant number of new housing units.



Above: *Downtown parking.*

The master planned community concept has direct applicability on this site. The addition of numerous new housing units downtown would make a big difference in the rebirth of the downtown area. Since new commercial and office uses would be constructed to serve the needs of the new residents, mixed use development would become a major attraction for residents wishing to live closer to the heart of the city.

Parking Issues

To ensure successful redevelopment efforts, there needs to be sufficient parking facilities.

Construction of facilities around the perimeter of the downtown and within its center is essential to attract shoppers and provide long term parking for downtown employees and residents. Major investors in the downtown area will demand sufficient parking facilities. Parking site location decisions will require careful analysis of traffic flow patterns, transit interfaces, and linkages to pedestrian systems. Additionally, a mix of retail uses is encouraged at the ground level of parking structures.

As new public projects are built, parking facilities should be built to serve the needs of those facilities and to accommodate off-peak parking demands as well. Over time, a sufficient amount of parking will be built to accommodate the additional activities that will occur here.

INFILL REDEVELOPMENT

Infill development is the process of developing vacant or under used parcels of land within existing urban



Above: Project Vida housing in South-Central El Paso.

areas that are already largely developed. El Paso has a significant amount of vacant land within city limits, which has been passed over in the normal course of urbanization. There are several reasons for bypassing parcels of land; developers are usually attracted to less expensive opportunities elsewhere.

Infill development contributes to a more compact form of development which is less consumptive of land and resources. It can therefore serve as a land development and redevelopment tool which promotes stable neighborhoods

as well as commercial and industrial development. Infill can create increased affordable housing opportunities through higher density housing. Higher residential densities can facilitate interaction between neighbors, improving the sense of place for neighborhoods which, in turn, can increase the quality of life. Finally, infill development can help to reduce long commutes, automobile use, and fuel consumption by creating housing close to the central city and public transit.

A successful infill development program focuses on the completion of the existing community fabric by filling in gaps in neighborhoods. Infill development contributes to a healthy mix of uses that provides added vitality and convenience for residents. Several distinct infill projects have been undertaken in the City successfully. Numerous opportunities for additional and diverse infill projects still exist given the significant amount of vacant land within city limits.

Encouraging Infill Development

The City can play a critical role in encouraging infill development; implementing land development strategies

is one way, easing the concerns of neighborhood groups that may oppose infill projects is another. Additionally, reexamination of the City code and planning policies may be necessary to promote infill standards. Relaxation of building setback, lot size and street width requirements are three of the principal issues associated with designing new infill communities that have more of the human scale elements within them that create a stronger sense of community.

Efficient processing of development applications will help to create a positive environment for developers interested in infill. Finally, and most importantly, the City can apply the community development incentives used with rehabilitation or redevelopment projects including: tax abatement, targeted capital improvements, low interest loans, targeting funds for housing improvements, down payment assistance and other technical assistance.

Strategies need to be in place to provide incentives for infill development and redevelopment in more central areas of the city. To increase the number and types of infill projects undertaken, targeted programs that help to maximize development opportunities on infill parcels served by the City can be implemented. Partnerships with public and private sector housing providers, developers, and builders are important to successfully implement infill programs.

Mixed Use Development

Mixed use development can be defined as residential, commercial and community facility land uses. By determining what services or facilities may be needed in a certain area, the development of a grocery store or park where none exists provides a more balanced mix of uses in that area. This approach increases convenience and provides greater choices to area residents. Characterized by overall residential densities high enough to support mass transit, and a wider variety of services and amenities, mixed use development is designed to support improved transportation choices, including convenient vehicular and pedestrian circulation and regular transit service. Attention to the character of development also is important to ensure that new development fits the existing context and gains neighborhood acceptance.



Above: *Mixed use along Yandell Street.*

When a wide variety of uses are located in close proximity to each other, walking and bicycling become practical alternatives to automobile travel. Such infill supports policies calling for improved mobility and reduced congestion. In return, infill development success can be enhanced by planning a mutually-supportive mix of uses. A mixing of uses can add variety and vitality to an area, making it a more attractive, interesting place to live. In addition, convenient commercial and personal services, readily accessible to work sites and residential areas, and convenient cultural or recreational amenities can enhance the attractiveness of infill development. Performance standards and careful design will be needed to ensure that

dissimilar uses can be made compatible neighbors.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

In this section of *The Plan for El Paso*, consideration is given to different issues that will help improve the overall quality of El Paso's built environment through property development strategies. These strategies suggest ways to improve site and building design for future development such that this new development will incrementally improve the quality of the areas in which they are built.

Commercial Development Design and Location Guidelines

- Locate commercial development within specific nodes and corridors that are served by major arterials and accessible to mass transit terminals and residential development. Mixed use development of commercial and office centers should be encouraged to locate near one another. Discourage access to shopping centers through existing or proposed residential areas, but provide for attractive pedestrian linkages to these areas. Mass transit terminals should locate, when feasible, within shopping centers and near high density commercial development to facilitate transit usage.
- Require adequate buffering between commercial centers and residential areas. Neighborhoods may also be buffered with high-density office development, where feasible, to create employment centers adjacent to residential areas. Types of buffers may include barriers such as landscaped berms, escarpments, streets, and utility rights-of-way, rows of trees and stone walls.
- Configure site design to facilitate efficient vehicular and pedestrian circulation for access to and from the development. Strip commercial centers should implement shared parking facilities for the reduction of curb cuts along major arterials. Access to and from parking lots should locate on side streets and not directly on to major arterials. Require parking lots within commercial developments to locate within the center of the site while placing the building close to the street to encourage pedestrian circulation at the street.
- Shopping centers should be architecturally compatible with adjacent development in terms of size, height, scale, color and aesthetic quality. Architectural themes for new commercial development should compliment the native or dominant environment.
- Landscaping in all commercial developments should be drought-resistant and compliment the native environment while paying special attention to parking facilities. Encourage placement of landscaping in islands at ends of parking rows as a strategy to break up large masses of pavement. Sign control should be implemented to create a consistent visual character. Signage should be placed at designated locations where it will not infringe on the aesthetic qualities of the development. Nuisance impacts to residential areas, such as noise, lighting, signs and traffic, should be mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

Industrial Development Design and Location Guidelines

- Encourage industrial development to locate in activity centers and corridors that are directly proximal to major arterials and the interstate system and in areas accessible to truck terminals, airports and railroad facilities. Industrial and manufacturing land uses should be consistent with adjacent development in terms of size, height, and scale. Prohibit access to industrial areas through existing or proposed residential areas. Encourage mass transit terminals to locate within industrial areas with concentrations of employment to facilitate transit use. Where possible, construct office parks and/or commercial uses as a buffer between industrial uses and residential development.
- Encourage site designs of industrial parks to have intensive truck activity located within a centralized, common area with access roads for vehicles located in an outer loop road configuration. This type of layout screens the more intense loading, unloading and warehouse activities from surrounding land uses. The office portion of these warehouse type businesses should be facing outwards towards the outer loop road. Parking lots for employees should be commonly located between the sides of buildings.
- Buildings should be designed to avoid large expanses of similar composition. Different materials, textures and colors should be used in the design of buildings to avoid the appearance of large concrete boxes. Each large structure should have unique design element that give each structure a separate and distinct personality which complements the overall character of the development.
- Where industrial and residential developments adjoin each other, where feasible, require significant buffer areas between these adjacent land uses. Promote landscaped earth berms with the planting of clusters or rows of trees to establish strong visual screens between uses. Other types of buffers may include barriers such as escarpments, streets, stone walls and utility rights-of-way.
- Where feasible, provide a landscaped space between parking areas and the mass of the building to bring human scale elements into the site. Avoid paving to the edge of buildings without any transitional landscaped spaces. Promote the planting of a significant number of trees in new developments to provide shading and screening. The use of drought-resistant plant species should take precedence over non native species. Require outside storage and refuse facilities to be screened from view with walls and/or fencing or be placed in the rear of the structure near loading docks.

Multi-Family Residential Design and Location Guidelines

- Encourage multi-family developments to locate in or near activity centers and corridors to offer access to existing transportation routes, transit services, and community facilities to service the needs of the population. Encourage the location of multi-family developments adjacent to parks and/or pedestrian paths that provide linkages to parks so residents have access to quality open spaces and recreational opportunities. Promote the development of pedestrian linkages from multi-family developments to commercial and other residential land uses.
- Encourage good building layout and site design to minimize adverse effects on adjacent land uses. Utilize buffers between uses where possible. Buffers may include landscaped berms, masonry walls, similar building heights, or compatible land uses. Provide sufficient off-street parking for residents and guests within the interior of the lot. Parking lots should be dispersed within a site instead of being concentrated in one area. Discourage on-street parking on adjacent streets. Landscape parking areas with numerous shade trees, and locate them to provide sufficient shade for vehicles and adjacent pedestrian areas. Encourage the use of significant amounts of drought-resistant landscaping and numerous shade trees to provide quality outdoor spaces for residents. Encourage open space and play areas to be well landscaped and located away from traffic areas.
- Housing units should be designed to include decks or other private outdoor spaces that allow residents to enjoy El Paso's excellent climate. Multi-story structures should be sited and windows located where possible to take advantage of scenic views available on each site. Maximize the number of units having access to these views. Where feasible, design housing units so that the main entrances open onto common areas or interior courtyards instead of into parking areas. Encourage facilities such as laundry rooms, swimming pools, manager's office, and waste containers to be placed at centralized locations within the development that benefit residents but do not cause an impact to adjoining land uses.
- Encourage buildings to be oriented to allow for the future use of solar energy by multi-family developments. Building locations should be staggered and sited to allow each structure solar access. Where possible, arrange buildings to create protected common spaces between them. These spaces could provide quality open spaces and excellent recreational areas for younger residents.
- Provide proper, environmentally sound lighting for outdoor areas to create a safe environment for building access points, access from streets, parking areas, as well as recreation areas. Outdoor lighting should be focused so it does not cast a glare on adjacent land uses or upwards into the night sky. Place address numbers on buildings so that they are clearly visible. Where a complex consists of multiple buildings, signs should be placed at access points to guide visitors and emergency personnel.

Manufactured Home Design and Location Guidelines

- Manufactured home subdivisions and parks should be developed at densities compatible with adjacent existing or proposed development, and adjacent to transportation routes to facilitate circulation. Mobile home subdivisions should locate near commercial and employment centers, where possible. Site layout configuration should facilitate pedestrian and vehicular circulation without causing nuisances to surrounding developments. Buffers should lessen potential negative effects on adjoining land uses. Buffers alone or in combination may include landscaping, masonry walls, berms, similar building heights, or compatible land uses.
- Where feasible, mobile and manufactured homes should be oriented on the lot to maintain residential character between the site and the neighborhood. Sidewalks should provide access to all residential units as well other amenities on each site. Parkways should contain native drought-resistant landscaping. Portions of the lot should be reserved as open space with a percentage of landscape provided at various locations. Common parking areas should be provided for guests and visitors.
- Architectural design themes should be implemented to generate an aesthetic consistency with adjacent development. Each individual site should maintain sufficient area to add a garage, porch or deck as needed. Facilities such as laundry rooms, swimming pools, manager's office, and waste containers should be placed at designated locations, as needed, easily accessible to all residents but not causing a nuisance to adjoining land uses. Storage facilities should be located at the rear of the residence and be screened.
- Drought-resistant landscaping or walls should be used to screen infrastructure facilities. Open space/recreation areas should be located away from traffic areas, be properly screened, and incorporated at locations easily accessible to all residents. Site development techniques should minimize and mitigate natural and man-made hazards to include flooding, soil conditions, and faulting.

URBAN DESIGN GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL: TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE CITY BY UPGRADING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT THROUGH BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMS, REVITALIZATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMERCIAL AREAS; THROUGH PROVISION OF QUALITY SPACES THAT ALLOW FOR PUBLIC GATHERING AND CIRCULATION AND LINKAGE BETWEEN FUNCTIONS; THROUGH PROTECTION OF HISTORICAL ASSETS AND PROMOTION OF QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO UPGRADE LIVING CONDITIONS.

POLICY: Develop principal design concepts to guide redevelopment and new development initiatives with an emphasis on improving the overall quality of the El Paso built environment.

-
- ACTION:** Design programs to ensure spatial linkages among diverse uses to promote access and re-use of public facilities.
- ACTION:** Create and adopt guidelines for neighborhood design and compatibility inclusive of residential and commercial uses.
- ACTION:** Upgrade the visual image of the community through additional landscaping, upgrading streetscapes, protecting scenic corridors, sensitive location of electrical distribution systems and the regulation of signage and street lighting.
- ACTION:** Expand housing opportunities at all income levels while focusing special efforts to meet the affordable housing needs of the community.
- ACTION:** Consider the use of master planned community principles in the design of new neighborhoods in El Paso expanding periphery.
- POLICY:** **Aggressively pursue the revitalization of downtown El Paso.**
- ACTION:** Implement redevelopment strategies for downtown that include expansion of civic facilities, creation of more public spaces and preservation of historical assets.
- ACTION:** Pursue the construction of a new border crossing complex that facilitates increased trade and tourism in this border area. In conjunction with the border facility, pursue the construction of a pedestrian mall concept to strengthen the pedestrian experience between downtown El Paso and downtown Juarez.
- ACTION:** Implement a housing development strategy for downtown to attract residents of diverse incomes in an effort to re-establish an area as safe and livable.
- ACTION:** Convert downtown railyards into quality tax producing uses that are compatible with a downtown mixed use environment.
- ACTION:** Promote the construction of a new multi-purpose arena in an area in or near downtown to generate additional social and commercial activity in the heart of the city.
- ACTION:** Provide essential circulation and parking facilities to promote easy movement and support land use investments in the downtown area.
- POLICY:** **Promote infill development that maximizes available land resources and creates a stronger and more attractive environment within City Limits.**
- ACTION:** Identify and encourage development of vacant lots within developed areas of the city.
- ACTION:** Encourage public and private sector partnerships that would stimulate investment in mixed use developments for vacant infill properties.

-
- ACTION:** Seek and set aside specific funding for infill and redevelopment demonstration projects.
- ACTION:** Identify funding sources and opportunities to correct infrastructure problems within infill parcels.
- ACTION:** Encourage the conversion of vacant, historic structures in the downtown area to housing units that serve all income levels. Provide historic rehabilitation and low income tax credits as mechanisms to encourage investment from the private sector.
- ACTION:** Implement new development and planning policies that encourage infill development. Consider variation of unit densities, lot size and street width requirements to allow for creative redevelopment of vacant parcels.
- ACTION:** Consider the allowance of flexible building setback regulations that allow for an increase in the street landscaping provided for each infill project.
- ACTION:** Develop design standards for infill and redevelopment projects.
- ACTION:** Utilize citizen input in the development process to create neighborhood support for infill development.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- POLICY:** Continue efforts to protect, preserve and enhance El Paso's historic neighborhoods and structures by utilizing them as an integral element in city wide revitalization and economic development efforts.
- POLICY:** Support the preservation of El Paso's historic resources through public information, advocacy and leadership within the community and through the use of regulatory tools.
- POLICY:** Provide wide-spread cultural and educational resources and information programs on historic preservation techniques and benefits.
- POLICY:** Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- POLICY:** Promote historic preservation landmarks and historic events as tourist attractions.
- ACTION:** Encourage development planning and design to sensitively incorporate preservation of historic structures and artifacts.
- ACTION:** Encourage the development of attractive and unique characteristics which help each neighborhood in developing its individual historical value and identity.
- ACTION:** Inform the public of tax benefits and funding sources available for restoration.
- ACTION:** Promote historic commemorative events marking significant landmarks in El Paso's development.